

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

**SALUTING SERVICE ACADEMY
STUDENTS BRIANNA BURNSTAD**

HON. SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 15, 2011

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an extraordinary group of young men and women who have been chosen as future leaders in our armed forces by the prestigious United States service academies. It is a privilege to send such a fine group from the Third District of Texas to pursue a world-class education and serve our Nation.

As we keep them and their families in our prayers, may we never forget the sacrifices they are preparing to make while defending our freedoms all across the globe. I am so proud of each one. God bless them and God bless America.

Today I salute Brianna Burnstad, a United States Military Academy Appointee. Brianna is a graduate of Plano Senior High School where she played volleyball, while simultaneously participating on a club volleyball team serving as the team captain. Brianna served as a member of student congress, the National Honor Society, and Third District Congressional Youth Advisory Committee. She was also active in her church as a confirmation teacher, youth choir representative, and took part in mission trips. Brianna wants to attend the United States Military Academy following in the footsteps of three generations of her family because she wants to pursue a career in the Army and wants to dedicate herself to something larger than herself. Brianna is not only impressed that West Point challenges its students academically, but also emphasizes the importance of physical and leadership training.

**IN HONOR OF THE LIFE OF CLARA
MAE SHEPARD LUPER**

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 15, 2011

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, today, we honor Clara Mae Shepard Luper and her lifelong work towards achieving equality for all in the state of Oklahoma. She has been the face of the Oklahoma Civil Rights movement since 1958 and to many she is a treasure to the United States and an icon for the struggle for equality.

In the face of segregation and wide-spread discrimination, Clara Luper decided that enough was enough. Mrs. Luper's courage, determination, and integrity cultivated her strong leadership to organize a sit-in protest at the Katz Drug Store in downtown Oklahoma City, a business that refused to serve black customers. Mrs. Luper was fearless when she

organized civil disobedience demonstrations and she unapologetically used these demonstrations to challenge the state of Oklahoma's allowance for discrimination against blacks.

I recall Mrs. Luper spoke about her mother witnessing a Black man who had been hung by a White mob in Texas. Regardless of her experience, however, her mother instilled in her a belief of "loving people, no matter what their color."

Mrs. Luper's mother believed that freedom and equality were guarantees of the Constitution and Mrs. Luper was bound to make sure the state of Oklahoma made good on that promise. Thus, she continued to influence others with the beliefs her parents taught her by including young people in the struggle for civil rights and immersing herself in demonstrations for equality across the country.

Mrs. Luper participated in the march in Selma against segregation in 1965. She was arrested then and many other times for protesting against social injustice. She was even beaten by demonstrators protesting against the movement in Selma. However, she courageously continued.

For over 40 years Mrs. Luper traveled with groups of young people from Oklahoma to conventions across the United States that rallied to end segregation in America. During these conventions, some students witnessed desegregated public bathrooms and restaurants for the first time in their lives. However, I most admire her journey with these young people to the March on Washington in 1963 and her leadership to hundreds of youth in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, NAACP, Youth Council in Oklahoma.

As an educator for over 40 years, Mrs. Luper taught American history to Oklahoma youth. Although she retired in 1991, many of her students still credit her for instilling in them a sense of worth and confidence that they could go out and change society for the better. Some of them considered her more than an educator, with many to this day still referring to her as "Mom."

She also had an interest in public service. In 1972, Mrs. Luper threw her hat into the political ring and ran for the U.S. Senate. She stated "as a teacher, I was interested in getting some practical experience in the political realm. And I sure did that." Although she did not win the nomination from the Democratic Party, many current politicians in Oklahoma and abroad have benefited from her courage and significant involvement in Oklahoma politics.

In the years following, Mrs. Luper founded the Miss Black Oklahoma Scholarship Pageant. Attending and affording college and a deep knowledge of American and civil rights history are the foundations of the scholarship pageant program. Young black Oklahoma women have benefited Mrs. Luper's vision to provide educational opportunities and scholarships to rising young leaders in the state and I am grateful for her efforts and investment in America's youth.

53 years ago, civil rights leader and icon Clara Luper displayed the inspiring courage to better this country for all of its citizens. I know that this Congress and the people of this Nation can work to further the ideals of Mrs. Luper and the Civil Rights Movement.

[From the New York Times, Jun. 11, 2011]

CLARA LUPER, A LEADER OF CIVIL RIGHTS SIT-INS, DIES AT 88

(By Dennis Hevesi)

Her name does not resonate like that of Rosa Parks, and she did not garner the kind of national attention that a group of black students did when they took seats at a Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, N.C., in February 1960. But Clara Luper was a seminal figure in the sit-ins of the civil rights movement.

Ms. Luper, who led one of the first sit-ins—at a drugstore in Oklahoma City 18 months before the Greensboro action—died Wednesday at her home in Oklahoma City, her daughter Marilyn Hildreth said. She was 88.

Ms. Luper was a history teacher at Dunjee High School in 1957 when she agreed to become adviser to the Oklahoma City N.A.A.C.P.'s youth council. The youngsters asked what they could do to help the movement.

On Aug. 19, 1958, Ms. Luper led three other adult chaperons and 14 members of the youth council into the Katz Drug Store in Oklahoma City, where they took seats at the counter and asked for Coca-Colas. Denied service, they refused to leave until closing time. They returned on Saturday mornings for several weeks.

The sit-ins received local press coverage. Eventually the Katz chain agreed to integrate lunch counters at its 38 stores in Oklahoma, Missouri, Kansas and Iowa. Over the next six years, the local N.A.A.C.P. chapter held sit-ins that led to the desegregation of almost every eating establishment in Oklahoma City.

"The actions that Ms. Luper and those youngsters took at the Katz Drug Store inspired the rank and file of the N.A.A.C.P. and activists on college campuses across the country," Roslyn M. Brock, the group's national chairwoman, said Friday.

Ms. Luper's activism extended beyond the sit-ins. A week after that first protest, 17 white churches in Oklahoma City let members of her youth group attend services. At another church, a pastor asked two youngsters to leave. The Associated Press reported at the time. "God did not intend Negroes and whites to worship together," he told them.

Ms. Luper was arrested 26 times at civil rights protests. Now a street is named after her in Oklahoma City, and flags flew Friday at half-staff in her honor.

Born Clara Mae Shepard on May 3, 1923, to Ezell and Isabel Shepard, Ms. Luper grew up near Hoffman, Okla. Her father was a brick worker, and her mother was a maid. "When she was a child, her brother got sick and they wouldn't treat him at the hospital," Ms. Hildreth said. "That really triggered her."

Ms. Luper is also survived by another daughter, Chelle Wilson; a son, Calvin; a sister, Oneita Brown; five grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; and one great-great-grandchild. Her husband, Bert Luper, died before her.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

Ms. Luper graduated from Langston University in 1944. In 1951 she earned a master's degree in history from the University of Oklahoma, where she was the first black student admitted to a graduate history program. She taught at Oklahoma City high schools until she retired in 1991.

On the blog *Stories in America*, she said her father "had never been able to sit down and eat a meal in a decent restaurant."

"He used to tell us that someday he would take us to dinner and to parks and zoos," she said. "And when I asked him when was someday, he would always say, 'Someday will be real soon,' as tears ran down his cheeks."

[From NewsOK.com, Jun. 9, 2011]

CIVIL RIGHTS LEADER CLARA LUPER HAS DIED (By Robert Medley and Bryan Painter)

Clara Luper, a civil rights pioneer whose lunch counter sit-ins helped end discrimination in public restaurants, has died. She was 88.

Luper died Wednesday night in Oklahoma City after a long illness, family members confirmed.

Luper has been the face of the Oklahoma civil rights movement since 1958, when she led a sit-in protest inside Katz Drug Store in downtown Oklahoma City, where the owners had refused to serve black customers.

Roosevelt Milton, 66, president emeritus of the NAACP's Oklahoma City and Oklahoma chapters, said she was a primary groundbreaker in the movement.

"I think that Clara was the last great civil rights icon in Oklahoma," Milton said. "She was a very passionate and fearless person when it came to the NAACP mission."

Oklahoma House Speaker Kris Steele, R-Shawnee, called Luper a civil rights giant.

"Throughout her life, Ms. Luper adhered to the principle that actions speak louder than words," Steele said. "Through her actions, she helped lead Oklahoma and the nation forward by showing courage and courtesy simultaneously, often in the face of unpleasant opposition. A road near the Capitol is now deservedly named in her honor, but perhaps the most fitting tribute to give Ms. Luper is fulfilling her vision that all Oklahomans and Americans are equal, our histories and futures intrinsically linked. She will be greatly missed, but her legacy will never be forgotten."

HISTORIC SIT-IN

In 1958, she chaperoned a group of black students to New York City. The trip eastward was through the northern states; many of the students experienced, for the first time, treatment equal to whites in public places. On their return through Southern states, they re-entered familiar, segregated territory. That brief taste of equality would help change American history.

In August 1958, a youth council group met in Luper's home and decided to force the issue at downtown eating places that refused to serve blacks. They decided to sit down and sit there until they were served.

With 13 young people, ages 6 to 13, including her two oldest children, Calvin and Marilyn, Luper directed a protest at Katz Drug on Main Street. She taught them courage and self-respect and the nonviolent philosophy of Martin Luther King Jr. She made certain that every day their clothes were clean and ironed, so they would look confident.

The youth endured curses and threats from other customers, were covered with ketchup, hot grease and spit and were kicked and punched. Luper was with them constantly. One black child was served a hamburger at the Katz lunch counter, and the breakthrough opened Oklahoma City restaurants

to blacks. Luper and the children demonstrated for better treatment for blacks at John A. Brown's luncheonette, Anna Maude Cafeteria, the Skirvin Hotel and Wedgewood Amusement Park.

LEGACY

Luper helped establish the Youth Council of the Oklahoma City Chapter of the National Association of the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in the 1950s and served as its adviser for 50 years. She is credited with directing a new type of nonviolent protest, the sit-in, and for staging the first such publicized event in the nation.

Luper taught American history for 41 years, beginning at Dunjee High School and working at other Oklahoma City schools; she retired from John Marshall in 1989.

Clara Shepard Luper was born May 3, 1923, in Okmulgee County, the middle of five children of Ezell and Isabell Shepherd. She attended Langston University, then became the first black student to enroll in the history department at the University of Oklahoma, where she earned a master's degree.

She marched with Martin Luther King Jr., whom she knew personally. In Selma, Ala., she was injured by a hit to the knee with a club. Luper was arrested 26 times during sit-ins and other nonviolent protests.

Her book, "Behold the Walls," published in 1979, detailed her work in the civil rights movement, much of which drew national attention.

Luper made an unsuccessful run for the U.S. Senate, became the first black vice president for the Oklahoma County Teachers Association and served as a consultant and adviser on school desegregation in Oklahoma City.

In 2000, a 2.7-mile section of NE 23, where she had led young people in walks and marches many times, was renamed the Clara Luper Corridor. In 2002, Edward L. Gaylord, then president of The Oklahoma Publishing Co., initiated a scholarship fund in her name, honoring her life work of giving youngsters self-respect and hope, along with a start on their education.

In later years, Luper directed celebrations of the anniversaries of civil rights landmarks, and produced the Miss Black Oklahoma pageant, which she used as a medium to teach young women social skills. She opened the Freedom Center, the northeast Oklahoma City headquarters for NAACP youth programs and frequently served as a calming, practical influence for cooperation in race relations.

REMEMBERING LUPER

As a 16-year-old, Joyce Henderson, a soon-to-be senior at Dunjee High School, heard the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. present his "I Have a Dream" speech Aug. 28, 1963. With a little cash in her purse and a change of clothes in a small suitcase, Henderson boarded one of two charter buses with fellow students active in the NAACP Youth Council. One of her teachers, Clara Luper, invited her to make the trip to Washington.

Last Friday and again Monday, Henderson went by to see Luper. On Friday, "I said, 'Mother Luper, this is Joyce.' She nodded her head; she knew who I was."

Henderson, though not in on the initial sit-in, became involved in the movement. She said Luper's students at Dunjee would call her "Ms. Luper."

"As we've grown older many of us began calling her Mother Luper," she said. "She was truly that. For whatever reason she made each of us feel special, like she was our mother."

Henderson always felt a sense of security knowing of Luper's presence in the world, she said. That made Thursday a sad day for Henderson, who retired in 2006 after 36 years as an educator and administrator.

"You've got to admit that Oklahoma and this world is a better place because of Mother Luper," she said.

Bruce Fisher, administrative program officer for the Oklahoma History Center, was emotionally shaken Thursday when he heard the news.

Fisher played a major role in designing an exhibit at the museum featuring a replica of the Katz Drug Store lunch counter. He said Luper's efforts are an important part of Oklahoma history and important to the national civil rights movement as well.

"I wanted to make sure that we never forget that, and what an important role she played in ensuring the rights and freedoms that so many of us now take for granted," Fisher said.

Valerie Thompson, president and chief executive officer of the Urban League of Greater Oklahoma City, said Oklahoma has lost an innovative educator and pioneer for change.

"Clara Luper served as a beacon for civil rights and equality," Thompson said. "Her pioneering spirit, tireless commitment to education and advocacy for equal opportunity will never be forgotten."

Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett said Luper was a great Oklahoman and a great American.

"Her peaceful, resolute sit-in protest at the Katz Drug Store, where the owners at the time refused to serve African-Americans, paved the way for equal rights in Oklahoma City," Cornett said. "If that was the extent of her contribution to Oklahoma and the Nation, it would have been accomplishment enough, but that act came early on, and Clara dedicated the rest of her long and wonderful life to such basic human needs as dignity, honor and respect."

Cornett requested that flags on city property be flown at half-staff in honor of Luper through sunset Friday.

Gov. Mary Fallin described Luper as a tremendous civil rights activist and a devoted mother.

U.S. Rep. James Lankford, R-Oklahoma City, said, "The courage of Clara Luper and her children provided the turning point in Oklahoma's race relations, through their dignified and principled stand against discrimination in 1958. A lifetime later, our culture has made great strides, but we still have much work to do to remove barriers that keep Americans from achieving their fullest potential. Today's generation can thank Clara Luper for many of the freedoms they experience today."

[From paregien.net, Aug. 6, 2008]

CLARA LUPER: MOTHER OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN OKLAHOMA (By Stan Paregien Sr.)

Most people would probably try to hide the fact that they had been arrested not just one or twice but 26 times. But there is only one Clara Luper, and she wears those arrests like battle decorations. And so they were. Only the battle was not against an enemy nation but against the ignorance and intolerance that fostered racial problems right here in the good ol' USA.

Clara Shepard was born on May 3, 1923 in Okfuskee County, Oklahoma. Her parents were dirt-poor share croppers with a total of five children. She attended a segregated (all Black) elementary school in Hoffman, Oklahoma. She graduated from Grayson High School in 1942.

"One of my little brothers got very sick. So my parents took him to the only doctor in Henryetta, Oklahoma. But the doctor refused to examine him because he was Black. And he died shortly after that."

Clara married Bert Luper at Durant, Oklahoma. Clara and Bert had three children—

Calvin, Marilyn, and Chelle. After his death, she married Mr. Wilkerson.

She graduated from a segregated Black college, Langston University (Langston, Oklahoma) with the B.A. degree in math and education.

A TEACHER FOR 41 YEARS

Her first job after graduation was teaching at a Black school for orphans, deaf and blind students. That was at Taft, Oklahoma. She also taught school in Pawnee, Oklahoma. But her longest tenure and greatest impact was at the segregated Dunjee High School in Oklahoma City and, later, at John Marshall High School. She taught history, Human Relations, math and social studies. And, just as important, she instilled in them a sense of worth and a confidence that they could go out and change society for the better. She retired in 1991, after 41 years as an educator and motivator of Black students.

Luper said, "My students had dreams about what they could become. I looked at them like you'd look at a caterpillar long before it changes to a butterfly. I knew they had skills and abilities down deep that they could not yet see. So I did my best to develop those gifts, to polish those diamonds in the rough. That is what teaching is really all about."

OKLAHOMA PRIOR TO 1950

By way of a short history lesson, many promoters convinced Blacks from both the South and the North that the new state of Oklahoma (admitted to the Union in 1907) was a Promised Land for them. And many hundreds of Blacks moved West and developed small, all-Black towns in Oklahoma.

Along with the Black towns came Black-owned newspapers. And in 1914 one Black newspaper man founded his own newspaper, *The Black Dispatch*, in the Black area of Oklahoma City. He was outspoken in his calls for Blacks to fight the forced segregation as practiced in most of the nation at the time. And he argued that Blacks should become involved in politics to make sure their voices were heard.

The tensions between the races rose even higher following the tragic race riot in Tulsa in 1921. It was triggered by an incident in which a Black man allegedly made unwelcome advances on a White woman. The end result was that most of the Black business district on the north side of Tulsa was burned to the ground and some 300 people killed.

Clara Luper's own parents had different approaches to dealing with racial segregation and other injustices. "My dear mother believed in loving people, no matter what their color. She was always a bit afraid of the power of White people. She had actually seen a Black man hung by a White mob in Texas. So she was never eager to step out and challenge the status quo."

"My father, Ezell Shepard, served in the U.S. Army while it was still highly segregated and suffered many injustices. And there he saw new and better relations between the races, where people were judged more by what they could do than by the color of their skin. So he was more willing to challenge the system. He was just a man of great optimism who did not dwell on negative things but looked for the good things."

"One time we all got on a bus, headed somewhere or other. And I asked my parents, 'Why do we have to sit here in the back of the bus?' My mother whispered in my face, 'You just shut up, girl.' But my father laughed and said, 'Oh, that's alright. Don't you worry about it Clara. Times will get better some day.' That is how it was in our family. He was a 'some day' man."

On Dec. 5, 1955, a young Black girl named Rosa Parks in Montgomery, Alabama set off

a furor when she refused to give up her seat on a bus to a White woman. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., followed up with a call for a boycott of the bus system until they agreed to end their racist seating rules. That boycott lasted until December of 1956, when the city finally agreed to eliminate their discriminatory rules.

"Oh, I got great strength of courage by seeing the new coverage of those Black people taking action to better their lives," Clara Luper said with a wave of her arm. "And it also filled me with anger that they had to walk to work and elsewhere just to fight for the same seating rights as White people."

THE FREEDOM CENTER

I interviewed her as we sat in her modest office at the Freedom Center she helped establish at 2609 N. Martin Luther King Avenue in Oklahoma City. That was on August 6, 2006. Her speech was strong and animated, her pronunciation so distinct and precise as to be almost theatrical. It was obvious that her talent in public speaking had been honed by years of teaching and motivating others. And I could imagine how, fifty years ago, many lesser educated Whites and Blacks could feel intimidated or even threatened by her self-confident poise.

"This building has been a blessing to our people," she said. "The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, NAACP, started meeting in my house at 1818 NE Park Place in 1957. We soon needed a bigger place to meet and we bought and converted what had been an old Mobil gas service station to our Freedom Center. We were able to rally a large number of people, particularly young people, to participate in our motivational activities. And a lot of White folks didn't like that one bit."

"So one night someone threw a torch or a bomb into the building. All my personal correspondence with people like Martin Luther King and Medgar Evers was lost in the fire. But we turned right around and rebuilt the building. The kids at Northwest Classen High School, where I was teaching, helped raise some of the money. No one was ever arrested for the crime."

THE SIT-IN IN OKLAHOMA CITY

On August 18, 1958, Clara Luper led her students into a Katz Drug Store in downtown Oklahoma City. The drug store also had a lunch counter and soda fountain, but only served White people. So Luper and her young people walked in and placed their orders and, when promptly refused, they sat down and refused to leave. This was a peaceful and orderly and non-violent demonstration to gain the right to eat there. But the police were summoned and escorted the group from the building. But Luper and the students returned time and time again until the store finally gave in and agreed to serve Blacks just as they did everyone else.

INFLUENCE OF RELIGION

She said that she came from a very religious family. "My Christian faith has always been extremely important to me, both in my personal and professional life and in my experiences in the Civil Rights Movement. It all goes back to my parents and grandparents who taught us to believe for the rain when it didn't fall, to believe for the sun when it didn't shine and to pray to the God we had never seen."

"And I was heavily influenced by the ministers in the Black community. They were largely uneducated or self-taught. But despite their lack of a formal education, they were often the best role models for our children. And most of them did all they could to help our young people."

"You see," she said with a big smile, "those ministers were not dependent on

White employers for their incomes, unlike most Black folks. So they could be more vocal on social issues."

Clara Luper is a long-time member of the Fifth Street Baptist Church in Oklahoma City.

MARCH ON WASHINGTON

In 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., called for a march on Washington, D.C., to demand passage of the Civil Rights Bill. About a hundred people, including Clara Luper, loaded onto two buses for the trip to Washington and were present on that historic day, August 28, 1963. Some 250,000 people crowded together to hear the speakers. And all of the U.S. TV networks, as well as many foreign networks, carried to messages to millions of people around the world.

"We had a great time on those buses. We sang freedom songs and talked about what a great gathering it would be. And it was better than we could ever have imagined. There were rows and rows of buses as far as the eye could see, with hundreds of thousands of people gathered together. The highlight was when Dr. King gave his 'I Have a Dream' speech. That was so simple and yet so powerful. My son, Calvin, got to shake hands with Dr. King and with President John Kennedy."

"We had come to Washington. Then we got back on the bus and it was silent for a long time. Then someone broke out singing 'We Shall Overcome' and we all started singing. It was an enchanting, heavenly feeling that I shall never forget. Yes, yes."

"You know something?" she asked, rhetorically and then firmly stated, "It is hard to love your enemies, those who would walk up to you and spit in your face. But Dr. Martin Luther King said you've got to. And, of course, he got that from the Bible."

Unfortunately, President Kennedy was assassinated just three months later. But his successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, signed the Civil Rights Act into law on July 2, 1964. The bill gave the federal government absolute power to enforce school desegregation. It even prohibited segregation in public places. And, just as important for the long haul, the Civil Rights Act established a Commission on Equal Employment Opportunity.

"The Civil Rights Bill of 1964," Luper noted, "was also a big help to women. For the most part, and particularly in the Black community, women were taught to be subservient to men. Women had been indoctrinated to believe they were dumb and that whatever men said was the end of the discussion. But that Bill said you cannot discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color or sex. So that was something to really be proud of."

Times were changing for the better, to be sure. Just like Clara's father had predicted.

MARCH ON SELMA

In 1965, Clara Luper and Eddie Stamps and others drove in vans to Selma, Alabama to march against segregation.

"In Selma it was just like a war. The Civil Rights protesters were on one end of the town and the police and their supporters ('posse men') were on the other end. Even the highway patrol pointed guns at us as we drove into town."

"When we started our march, one of the 'posse men' as they called themselves, hit me on the leg. My leg started bleeding and the girls, white girls, that were with me started crying and saying, 'Oh, mamma, mamma, you're hurt.' And those posse men or Klu Klux Klan came up and said to the white girls, 'Is she your mamma?' and the white girls said, 'Yes, that's our mamma.'"

"So those men came back to me and asked me who the father of those girls were, since they were calling me mamma. So I told them God was their father. And those men began

to cuss and say 'Screw them niggers'. So I knew they were ignorant and it didn't matter what I said to them," Luper said.

"About that time Dr. Martin Luther King came up and got us all to walk toward the bridge in an effort to get the local Blacks registered to vote. It was a long, hard day.

"That night we all fanned out to be in different homes to listen to President Lyndon Johnson speak on TV to the Nation. I wound up in a pretty run-down house. We all watched TV as President Johnson said that the very next day he was going up to speak to the Congress and to ask them to pass a voters rights bill. We all just went wild."

POLITICAL CANDIDATE

In 1972, Luper threw her hat into the political ring. She ran for the U.S. Senate against fellow Democrat Mike Turpen and Republican Dewey Bartlett.

"As a teacher, I was interested in getting some practical experience in the political realm. And I sure did that. I had debates with both Turpen and Bartlett, so it gave me a great platform to express my views. But, of course, Dewey Bartlett won the election. It was still a great educational experience for me and for my students. I really enjoyed that experience more than anything else I have ever done.

"I remember one incident down somewhere in southeast Oklahoma, down there in 'Little Dixie'. I was speaking at a political rally when a White man stood up and asked me what I thought about interracial marriage. I said, 'I'm so happy you asked me that. You see as an educator and a student of history, I have never seen an ant having intercourse with an elephant. What that basically means, sir, is that anything that God did not want to have mate with another of his creations He made it physically impossible. That man got mad and walked out,' she said with a hardy laugh."

When asked what her typical day is like today, Clara Luper said: "There really is no 'typical day,' because I am involved in so much and traveling a lot. But when I am home, I usually get up at 6 a.m. I shower, read the newspapers and listen to the news on either the TV or the radio. Then I go down to the little lake behind my house and, every other day, I feed the fish. And then I usually phone my children and talk with my sister. And on Mondays, I try to spend several hours at my office at the Freedom Center."

She says she also relaxes by playing the word game Scrabble with anyone who is available. And she likes listening to spiritual music and to the blues.

HONORS TO WHOM HONORS ARE DUE

At the time of my interview with her, Clara Luper was 83 years old. Yet she still maintained a heavy speaking schedule all across the country. That is because she is known as a freedom fighter, a true Civil Rights hero, across the nation and not just in Oklahoma.

The Oklahoma House of Representatives passed HB 2715 honored her by naming a portion of NE 23rd Street in Oklahoma City as "Clara Luper Corridor". She has been inundated with over 500 other honors as well. And of them she says, "Every award has been a recognition of the people who worked with me. So all those awards are special. It just shows what people working together for a common cause can do."

Devon Energy Corporation joined hands with Oklahoma Gas & Electric Company to establish a "Clara Luper Scholarship" program at Oklahoma City University. It was set up to help minority students and to honor Luper for her contributions to education in Oklahoma and to the Civil Rights movement here and throughout the Nation.

And on May 5, 2007, the first 22 Clara Luper scholars received their diplomas from OCU. They had completed, as a group, some 13,000 hours of community service during their four years at the University.

Clara Luper wrote a 346 page book, *Behold the Walls*, which is her account of development of the Civil Rights movement during her lifetime. It was published in 1979, and Oklahoma City University reprinted the book in January, 2007.

"Looking back after all these years," Luper said. "I see how the progress we made took the coordinated efforts of so many people. It was not just the work of Clara Luper. It was the work of every person who helped in any way to advance the movement. Some marched and some participated in sit-ins, while others were behind the scenes in prayer and providing food and money for those of us who were out front.

"I have seen in my lifetime the fulfillment of my father's dream that 'Someday it will be alright'. I have seen us get the right to eat in any restaurant or to use any restroom, to stay in any hotel in the country. I am grateful that we are now able to take our family to the zoo on any day, not just on one day a week that was formerly designated for coloreds. But we still have a long way to go."

SALUTING SERVICE ACADEMY STUDENT EMILY BOYSON

HON. SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 15, 2011

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an extraordinary group of young men and women who have been chosen as future leaders in our armed forces by the prestigious U.S. service academies. It is a privilege to send such a fine group from the Third District of Texas to pursue a world-class education and serve our Nation.

As we keep them and their families in our prayers, may we never forget the sacrifices they are preparing to make while defending our freedoms all across the globe. I am so proud of each one. God bless them and God bless America.

Today I salute Emily Boyson, a U.S. Merchant Marine Academy Appointee. Emily is a graduate of Bishop Lynch High School where she was on the varsity swim team and partook in the breast stroke and individual medley. Emily was also a part of the National Honor Society as the parliamentarian, Mu Alpha Theta as treasurer, and the New Conservatory Dallas as a violinist. Emily was part of a prestigious mathematics program in high school and won several awards in school science fairs. She received the Star Student Award given to her by Bishop Lynch faculty, the Renaissance Program Award and the Dean of Students Letter of Recognition of Perfect Conduct. Emily wants to attend an Academy in order to mold herself into a strong, effective military leader capable of protecting America while fulfilling the mission of the military.

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2012

SPEECH OF

HON. ALBIO SIRE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 14, 2011

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2112) making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2012, and for other purposes:

Mr. SIRE. Madam Chair, I rise today to express my deep concern regarding the drastic cuts being made to the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) in the Agriculture Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2012. While I understand the need to balance the budget, I cannot support cuts made to WIC, which has proven to be an effective tool in improving the health of our Nation's children.

Over nine million low and moderate income women, infants, and children rely on WIC to provide them with quality nutrition education services and access to maternal, prenatal, and pediatric health-care services. WIC is a premier public health nutrition program and makes sure that our Nation's children begin their life as healthy as possible. During early childhood, infants with poor nutrition are susceptible to increased chances of anemia and negatively impact a child's ability to learn. WIC plays a vital role in ensuring that WIC infants are in better health than eligible infants not participating in WIC.

With approximately one out of every two babies born in our country enrolled in WIC, it is a vital service that not only ensures infants' healthy well-being, but also saves health care costs. Up to \$3.13 for every WIC dollar spent within the first 60 days of birth results in health care cost savings. Additionally, lower Medicaid costs are tied to prenatal participation in the WIC program. Preterm births cost our country over twenty-six billion dollars every year with the average first year medical costs for premature births costing over forty-nine thousand dollars and first year medical costs for babies without complications cost just over four thousand dollars. It has been proven that for every dollar spent on prenatal WIC participation for low-income Medicaid women, the results included fewer premature births, longer pregnancies, and fewer infant deaths.

In my home state of New Jersey, the number of women, infants, and children that participate in the program is 171,060. Sixty-one percent of WIC participants are families with income below the poverty level—these are our constituents that are most in need. If the bill is passed, and depending upon the rate of food inflation, New Jersey may lose 3,700 to 6,500 WIC participants, and nationwide there may be a loss of 200,000 to 350,000 WIC participants. During the past fifteen years, Congress has been committed to provide enough funding to all eligible women and children who apply for WIC, and this legislation will break this promise. Indeed, if funding for WIC is insufficient, thousands of women and children